Council on Technology Services
State Local Applications and Network Integration Workgroup
COTS Report February 17, 2000

Last Meeting: Thursday, February 10, 2000, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Department of Information Technology 3rd Floor Executive Conference Room

In attendance:

David Molchany, Fairfax County - Co-Chair
David Sullivan, City of Virginia Beach - Co-Chair
Barry Cross, Chesterfield County
Ken Mittendorf, Virginia Supreme Court
Andy Poarch, Virginia Department of Information Technology
Bob Rike for Bill Shinar, Virginia Geographic Information Network
Jerry Simonoff, Virginia Department of Technology Planning
Bill Sporn for Naseem Reza, Virginia State Police
Bobby Watlington, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles
Bill Girling, Innovative Business Solutions, Inc
Kriss Keeney, Bell Atlantic Data Solutions Group
John Trongone, Bell Atlantic Data Solutions Group
Jim Wynn, IonIdea, Inc.
Ajay Sagar, Pixl, Inc.

At our last meeting in December it was decided that Dave Molchany would draft a first cut of the State/ Local Applications position outline using the material from the report entitled "Tying a Sensible Knot: A Practical Guide to State-Local Information Systems" by the Center for Technology in Government. Dave completed that draft outline and it is included below. Last month we asked for comments on the draft and received two sets of comments.

Draft Outline for the State and Local Application and Network Integration Workgroup -- State-Local Information Systems Report

I. State-local information systems link state and local agencies together

- To provide consistent service delivery and program administration
- To allow the sharing of information to achieve mutual program and administrative goals

II. State-local information systems are complicated and requirements change rapidly

- State and local governments often don't understand each others roles

- There is an enormous variation in local conditions and technical capabilities
- State agencies are tasked to make programs and solutions work statewide despite differences at the local level

III. What makes an ideal state-local information system project -- Four characteristics

- Compelling objectives
- Effective project management structure
- Comprehensive technical designs
- Easy to use solutions

IV. Barriers to ideal state-local information systems

- Lack of education and information about technology and programs
- Lack of shared, reliable computing/network infrastructure
- Goals that are too ambitious for the resources available
- Human and organizational resistance to change
- Unrealistic time frames
- Organizational, programmatic, technological and legal complexity
- Changing priorities
- Overlapping or conflicting missions among agencies

V. Guiding Principles for collaborative state-local information system initiatives

- Understand each others abilities, strengths and limitations
- Have a clear purpose and realistic measurable expectations
- Commit to serious partnerships that focus on common goals
- Choose the right people for the jobs that need to get done
- Expect to assemble a mixture of resources (funding and staff)
- Communicate as if your survival depends on it
- Design systems that integrate and enhance the business
- Demonstrate and refine ideas before you implement
- Let common sense guide you to workable solutions

VI. Best Practices Identified

- Define purpose and scope
- Choose a well-skilled and respected project leader
- Recruit the right project team
- Sell the project to decision makers (know the right decision makers)
- Communicate often and clearly with stakeholders
- Finance creatively

- Adopt tools and techniques that can manage complexity
- Look for existing models
- Understand and improve processes before you apply technology
- Match the technology to the job
- Use industry standard technology
- Adopt and abide by data standards
- Integrate with related processes and practices
- Prototype for understanding and agreement about design
- Choose a capable and representative pilot site
- Make the best use of vendors
- Train thoroughly
- Support users
- Review and evaluate performance

VI. Summary

- State and local governments must learn to understand each other and work together as a team to deliver information system solutions that enhance both the delivery of service to constituents and the process that is used to deliver service
- Adoption of the guiding principles and best practices can help achieve the above goal

The web citation for the Center for Technology in Government document is:

http://www.ctg.albany.edu/resources/abstract/iis1.html

The workgroup went through the entire outline and discussed a number of points for revision. Points discussed included:

- Building in more of the state agency perspective by using the information from the previous presentations to the workgroup by the agencies which have significant impact on localities.

- Focusing on inter-networking between agencies and local government

- Develop recommendations on how to operationalize the Guiding Principles, working with Department of Technology Planning and how they could be addressed within the Enterprise Architecture

- Consider developing systems based on customer driven events rather than government driven requirements, i.e. "I've moved"

- Develop a visual matrix of the state to locality relationships in order to adequately portray the complexities

A subcommittee was formed to incorporate these comments into the draft prior to the next full workgroup meeting on March 8, 2000. We also agreed that our meeting schedule for 2000 would generally be the second Thursday of each month from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. in the DIT 3rd floor Executive Conference Room.

David Sullivan, Co-Chair